361 Monguors seem to have an inbred abhorrence for the straight line. Some strongholds are inhabited by one hundred or two hundred families, mostly poor people, and have more and larger shops. The central stronghold is not, socially, the center of the village except when the T'u-ssu lives there. Monguor farmers, owning more cattle than Chinese, do not like to live confined within walls. Even the village meetings are not held in the stronghold.

The principle determining the location of villages seems not to have been the size of the population or the extent of the territory, but rather the topography (good defense points) or natural centers of community interest, such as an irrigation canal. In some cases the origin of a village can be traced to the fact that, in order to avoid trouble, a group of families split away from its relatives and founded a new village. In other cases, splitting-off was in order to move within reach of new pastures and sources of wood-supply. For such reasons there is great variation in density of population and distances between the villages.

DWELLINGS

342 Since, according to tradition, the Monguors were originally nomads who lived in circular felt tents, it is not surprising that when they settled in Kansu and began to build houses, they copied those used by the frontier Chinese, and so the houses of the Monguors are built on the Chinese pattern. Construction begins with the building of four outer walls, forming a square and facing south. The walls are formed in the following way: The earth is levelled for the foundation. Planks are set on edge, facing each other and braced by uprights. These determine the thickness of the wall. Earth is shovelled between the planks and then pounded tight by lifting and dropping a heavy wooden ram. When the space between the planks has been tightly packed, the planks are raised and the next course is packed in the same way. By adjusting the distance between the planks, the wall is made to taper slightly toward the top. Within the walls are built the mud-walled and thatch-roofed houses, with wooden rafters and beams. At the southwest corner of the enclosure there is a small gate, not wide enough to allow a cart to enter, because a small gate is easier to defend than a large one.

343 In the angles of the other three corners are built the stables and the kitchen, which is separate from the dwelling quarters. Under the windows, outside the buildings, are constructed mangers for the cattle. At night the courtyard is crowded with noisy animals, horses, mules, and donkeys. The Monguors like to sleep amid the animals as their nomad ancestors did.

342 In the houses along the side walls live the younger sons, and in the same buildings are stored grain, skins, wool, farming implements, saddles, the grindstone, etc.

The chief of the family lives in the northern building against the back wall of the enclosure. A large room

1; Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

342 in the center is the living room, and is used for the reception of guests and as the dining room. One of the two smaller rooms on either side of the living room is occupied by the chief of the family and his wife; the room opposite is occupied by the eldest son.

352 The largest part of each dwelling room is occupied by the *k'ang*—a small platform, two or three feet high, 354 built with bricks, upon which the whole family sleeps, sits, talks, sews, etc. In front of the platform there is a small oven, the smoke from which passes through brick channels under the platform before reaching the chimney so that the platform is always warm. In winter the *k'ang* is a wonderful invention. On it are spread felt rugs, and along the wall are folded and piled the covers and skins used at night. Three or four wooden cases along the wall contain the clothes of members of the family and the treasures of the mother (needle box, sewing materials, etc.), and there is also a small cupboard. Along 353 251 the wall, hung on pegs, are a gun, a stringed musical instrument, clothes, etc. In the corner of the room stands a jar containing fermenting pickled vegetables. 342 Part of the smoke of the oven escapes through a hole pierced in the window and the door is opened when the smoke is too heavy. Beams and rafters are like ebony, blackened by the oily smoke. Around New Year, the walls are whitewashed and two or three pictures of deities are placed on the walls. After a few days the whitewash turns brown and the walls are muddy again.

343 In the northeast corner of the courtyard is the kitchen and in this building the youngest of the married sons lives with his family—for in this blessed corner, according to the shaman, a large progeny is to be expected.[1] The two remaining corners are converted into stables—for these corners, again according to the shaman, are propitious for the reproduction of animals. Sheep and cows are fenced outside the courtyard.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE

621 184 Since nobles and commoners live in the same kind of house and earn their living by the same means, their substance and wealth are not sharply differentiated. Poor and rich, nobles and commoners, live in the same hamlets, help each other and go in and out of each

[1] This custom preserves the tradition that the youngest son is "guardian of the hearth." There are many evidences that in ancient Turco-Mongol society elder sons moved away at marriage and received at that time their share of the inheritance. The youngest son remained with the parents and received the residual inheritance. Hence, according to Vladmirtsov (*Régime social des Mongols*, 60), the term *otchigin* or *otjigin*, "prince of the fire," for the youngest son. P. Pelliot and L. Hambis (*Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan* 1: 176, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1951) point out that *ot* is Turkish for "fire," while *chigin* is the medieval Mongol form of *tigin* (*tegin*), which though occurring in Turkish is in their opinion of Avar (old Mongol) origin. They point to another word for "youngest son," *otqan*, as "probably" deriving from ot-qan (khan), "sovereign of the fire."—O. L.

[p. 75a]

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 144 174 sider the Mongours an offshoot of the Mongols; others believe they are of Sha-t'o Turkish stock, and that they came to the Hsining region during the T'ang Dynasty (618-906), but that they were not subjugated by the Chinese until the Ming Dynasty.

N *563 M 648 175 311 The Chinese refer to the Mongours as T'u-jen, or natives, meaning the people born in a certain place, or the original inhabitants of that place. After the Mongours submitted to the rule of the Ming Dynasty, their chiefs, according to Chinese historical record, became Chinese officials with the title of T'u-ssu. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the fields around the towns in Kansu were irrigated by canals assigned to Chinese military colonists, and the grasslands in the valleys were assigned to the various T'u-ssu for the pasturing of their herds and the cultivation of grains without irrigation. As the Mongours were relegated to the side valleys, they were forced to abandon the more fertile irrigated fields, and for that reason part of them fell back on the pastoral economy which they had not yet entirely abandoned. The present day Mongours may be pastoral or agricultural, depending upon where they are located.

N *563 2. Patterns of living

a. Dwelling

M 342 The people were originally nomads who lived in circular felt tents like those of the Mongols. After they settled in Kansu, they lived in houses of the Chinese pattern, built by frontier Chinese.

M [351] The house is surrounded by walls, forming a square, facing south, with a small gate at the southwest corner. The house has mud walls, thatched roof, wooden rafters and beams. Stables and kitchen, separate from the dwelling quarters, are scattered M [343] at the other three corners. Mangers for the cattle are outside the buildings, under the windows. There are rooms along the side wall where the younger sons of the family dwell, or where grain, wood, saddles and farm implements are stored. The M [231] Mongours like the reassuring nearness of their animals, and at night the courtyard is crowded with noisy animals such as mules, donkeys and horses.

M [592] [574] The head of the family and his wife live in the northern building against the back wall of the enclosure. In the center of the house is a room used for the reception of guests and for the family dining room. The chief and his wife have one or two small rooms beside the living room, and the eldest son occupies the opposite room. In each room there is a brick k'ang, a sort M [354] of fireplace with its opening on the outside. The k'ang takes up [352] most of the room, and there is little furniture except some wooden chests where clothing and food are stored.

N *563 M 342 591 592 The youngest married son and his family live in the northwest corner of the courtyard near the kitchen. This is considered the "blessed corner," where many offspring may be expected. Tra-